
SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE

Report by Chief Executive

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

7 October 2015

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides members with an update on progress made in working towards the eight corporate priorities stated within the Council's Corporate Plan, approved in April 2013. It also proposes an updated Corporate Plan which includes a summary of priorities for the coming years and an updated Performance Management Framework.**
- 1.2 In April 2013, Scottish Borders Council approved a 5 year corporate plan. As well as a vision for the Council, underpinned by a set of values and standards, it presented 8 corporate priorities that would be addressed across a range of services and in partnership. The plan also set out the national and local context, the financial context for SBC and for partners, and the policy context at that time.
- 1.3 The internal and external context has changed significantly and as such a revised Corporate Plan is proposed at Appendix 1 (attached). The revised edition still focuses on the same vision, values and priorities, with only a slight change of wording to Priority 2, to reflect changes to service priorities within the Children and Young People's Service Directorate and a focus on inclusion.
- 1.4 Against each of the 8 Corporate Priorities, Scottish Borders Council can demonstrate that significant progress has been made, either through ongoing performance improvement or through the delivery of key pieces of work or projects that contribute to each priority. Annex 1 within the Appendix provides an Executive summary as well as a more detailed look at each of the 8 priorities.
- 1.5 There were two annexes to the 2013 Corporate Plan (Annex 1: Delivering against our Priorities, and Annex 2: Performance Management Framework) and again, revisions to both are proposed in Appendix 1 to reflect the changing local and national context, progress made, priorities for the future, and reporting arrangements.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Council:-

- (a) Notes the progress made in working towards the corporate priorities, detailed in Appendix 1 (Annex 1);**
- (b) Approves the new wording of Corporate Priority 2 – “Improving attainment and achievement levels for all our children and young people, ensuring an inclusive approach”;**
- (c) Notes the amendments made to the Performance Management Framework, also in Appendix 1 (Annex 2), to reflect and respond to internal and external changes.**

3 BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS SINCE 2013

- 3.1 In April 2013, Scottish Borders Council approved a 5 year corporate plan. This can be accessed at http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/900050/strategies_plans_and_policies/1314/corporate_plan

As well as a vision for the Council, underpinned by a set of values and standards, it presented 8 corporate priorities that would be addressed across a range of service and in partnership. These are :

Priority 1	<i>Encouraging sustainable economic growth</i>
Priority 2	<i>Improving attainment and achievement levels for all our children and young people, both within and out with the formal curriculum</i>
Priority 3	<i>Providing high quality support, care and protection to children, young people, adults, families, and older people</i>
Priority 4	<i>Building the capacity and resilience of our communities and voluntary sector</i>
Priority 5	<i>Maintaining and improving our high quality environment</i>
Priority 6	<i>Developing our workforce</i>
Priority 7	<i>Developing our assets and resources</i>
Priority 8	<i>Ensuring excellent, adaptable, collaborative and accessible public services</i>

- 3.2 The plan also set out the national and local context, the financial context for SBC and for partners, and the policy context, for example around Curriculum for Excellence and the Integration of Health and Social Care.
- 3.3 Scottish Borders Council has made significant progress against its eight corporate priorities over the last 2 ½ years. As well as delivering a range of key projects, service performance has improved across a range of areas, and these things combined are having a wider positive impact on individuals, communities and businesses in the Scottish Borders.

A summary is provided below of significant progress and full details are provided within Annex 1 of the appendix:

Priority 1: economic growth

- Committed £7.6m and secured significant partnership resources to maximise the benefits of the Borders Railway
- Helped create 477 businesses and awarded £484k in business grants/loans
- Delivered 134 affordable homes, on track to deliver target of 300 by 2016
- Invested £4.2m in next generation broadband with a further £4.2m this year

Priority 2: attainment and achievement

- 94.3% of our school pupils went into a positive destination- 4th highest in Scotland
- 34.3% of S6 pupils attained level 5 (highers) or above – better than

the national average

Priority 3: support, care and protection

- 98% of clients received services within 6 weeks of being assessed (14/15) exceeding the target of 95%
- 6% of adults now manage their own care budget

Priority 4: our communities and voluntary sector

- Awarded 49 Community Grants in 2014/15 worth £150k, supporting projects totalling £980k
- Awarded 12 Landfill Communities Fund Grants in 2014/15, worth £221k, supporting projects totalling £1.5m

Priority 5: our high quality environment

- Invested £5m in energy efficient LED street lighting
- 50.8% of waste recycled at our Community Recycling Centres in Q3 14/15 - up from 47.97% in Q3 13/14

Priority 6: our workforce

- During 2014/15, employed 28 Modern Apprentices, ten employability fund posts, six supported employees and a range of student placements

Priority 7: our assets and resources

- Occupancy rates in Council industrial/commercial properties were at 91% in Q4 14/15 (up from 90% in 13/14).
- The Council sold 18 properties realising almost £1m to invest in services

Priority 8: excellent and accessible public services

- 97% of Freedom of information Requests were responded to on time (up from 77% in 13/14)
- Closed 81.4% of Stage 1 complaints within 5 working days (up from 76.6% in 13/14)

3.4 As part of a commitment to working towards the 8 Corporate Priorities, performance reports are now taken to the Council's Executive Committee on a quarterly basis. A range of performance information is presented under each of the corporate priorities and used by Elected Members to scrutinise performance. There have now been six such reports taken to the Executive Committee and these are also made publicly available via the Council's website (www.scotborders.gov.uk/performance).

3.5 Articles on Council performance are also included in SB Connect, and where relevant, performance information sits beside individual features, for example, around Business Gateway or grant funding. The Council's approach to reporting on performance has been commended by Audit Scotland in its annual review of Public Performance reporting.

4 PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

4.1 The internal and external context has changed significantly since 2013 and as such a revised Corporate Plan is proposed at Appendix 1, clearly explaining the changes and showing where the document has been updated.

- 4.2 This revised edition still focuses on the same vision, values and 8 corporate priorities. However, the emphasis for the Council's Children and Young People's Service Directorate, under the new Service Director Donna Manson, is on taking an inclusive approach and it is therefore proposed that Priority 2 is now reworded as follows to align more effectively with service priorities:

*Improving attainment and achievement levels for all our children and young people, **ensuring an inclusive approach.***

- 4.3 There were two annexes to the 2013 Corporate Plan:

Annex 1 (Delivering against our priorities) provided, for each of the 8 priorities, a short context, the key policy drivers and then under 3 headings (Business transformation, partnership work, and core business) the work that would contribute to each of the priorities was specified;

Annex 2 (Performance Management Framework) provided details of what Scottish Borders Council would do to monitor and report progress against the priorities identified in the Scottish Borders Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and within the Corporate Plan to ensure that Corporate Management, Elected Members, the Community Planning partners and the general public could see the progress that was being made.

- 4.4 Due to changes in the internal corporate context, the partnerships context and changes to the national context (including reporting requirements in relation to Statutory Performance Indicators), both annexes have been updated and are now part of Appendix 1. Details of the revisions proposed are provided below:

- 4.4.1 **Annex 1** (Delivering against our priorities) has been updated for each of the 8 corporate priorities. Each priority is divided into 3 key sections to show the following:

- *What has been achieved since April 2013*, for example investment made and projects delivered;
- *SBC performance*, and where relevant, the wider impact that the work of services is having for example on employment rates;
- *Priorities for the future*, including work with partners and Corporate Transformation programmes, for example, work to deliver the economic benefits associated with the Borders Railway.

- 4.4.2 **Annex 2** (Performance Management Framework) has been updated in light of corporate restructuring since April 2013, changes made to SBC's Scheme of Administration (with a move away from service specific committees to themed Executive Committee Meetings, focused on monitoring performance every quarter), changes to the Community Planning context, both nationally and locally, and changes to some national reporting requirements around Statutory Performance Indicators.

- 4.5 The Community Empowerment Act, approved by Scottish Parliament (June 2015) will have a significant impact on the working of Councils and Community Planning Partnerships across Scotland, leading to the

requirement to develop more locally tailored plans, performance reporting and accountability arrangements. SBC is addressing some of the requirements of the Act by developing its locality approach through a pilot in the Cheviot Area, and locality plans and performance reporting will be developed as part of this pilot. However, the focus will still be on working towards our 8 corporate priorities, as well as the priorities of the Community Planning Partnership focused on improving outcomes for people in the Scottish Borders.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) The risks associated with not having a simple, clear corporate plan to guide an organisation include a lack of strategic direction, short term focus, as well as staff indifference about the strategic direction of the organisation. The 2013 Corporate Plan was widely communicated amongst staff via posters, banners, the intranet, and was linked directly to the Performance Review and Development (PRD) process. It is proposed to continue with the use of these tools, allowing senior managers to continue to align their work, and the work of individuals within their teams, to the eight priorities.
- (b) A revised Business planning processes is also helping to ensure that work within services is aligned to Corporate priorities. These plans can be accessed at www.scotborders.gov.uk/businessplans
- (c) Tools such as the SBC website, SB Connect and posters in libraries and contact centres were used to communicate the plan more widely and again, will continue to be used alongside the development of the use of social media.
- (d) The changing internal and external context also present risks to an organisation, so it is important that an awareness of this changing context is demonstrated, as well as being clear about how the organisation is responding. The revised version of the corporate plan presented at Appendix 1 presents an updated context, reflecting changes within SBC and local and national policy changes. Annex 1 of the appendix clearly links each of the priorities to the Council's Corporate Transformation programme and to other key pieces of work, for example around changes within Community Justice.
- (e) If priorities are not clearly articulated, it is difficult to construct a performance framework and gauge how well an organisation is performing. Since June 2014, SBC's Executive Committee has been receiving quarterly performance reports, with performance indicators presented under each of the corporate priorities. These reports are also used for reporting SBC's performance publicly.

5.3 Equalities

- (a) An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out on the Corporate Plan in 2013. Working towards achieving the priorities in the Corporate Plan is central to enabling SBC to meet its equality duties, specifically to develop and work towards a set of equality outcomes and to mainstream its approach to equality and diversity across the organisation. Improved internal processes around Equality Impact Assessment and Business Planning are already helping SBC to ensure that this continues to be the case.
- (b) The proposed change to Corporate Priority 2, detailed in paragraph 4.2, will help SBC to meet the Equality Duty by the enhanced focus on inclusion for children and young people.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

There are significant economic, social and environmental benefits of addressing the priorities covered in the Corporate Plan.

5.5 Carbon Management

There are no effects on carbon emissions as a result of the recommendations in this report.

5.6 Rural Proofing

The updated Corporate Plan continues to seek to address the challenges of a rural context through the priorities that have been identified. Any work undertaken in the context of the Corporate Plan should reflect these challenges.

5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into this report.

Approved by

**Name
Title**

Signature

Author(s)

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Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council, 25 April 2013

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Sarah Watters can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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